

HOUSE No. 706

By Ms. Story of Amherst, petition of Ellen Story and others for an investigation by a special commission (including members of the General Court) relative to the integration of international human rights standards in the law and policies of the Commonwealth. The Judiciary.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PETITION OF:

Ellen Story	David Paul Linksy
Benjamin Swan	Matthew C. Patrick
Anne M. Paulsen	Frank I. Smizik
Anne M. Gobi	Alice K. Wolf
Kay Khan	Elizabeth A. Malia
Gale D. Candaras	Karen E. Spilka
Kathleen M. Teahan	Thomas M. Stanley

In the Year Two Thousand and Five.

RESOLVE TO ESTABLISH A SPECIAL COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE THE INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS INTO MASSACHUSETTS STATE LAW AND POLICIES.

- 1 *Whereas*, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has an interest
- 2 in ensuring the protection, safety, prosperity and happiness of all
- 3 its residents; and
- 4 RECOGNIZING that respect for the inherent dignity of all
- 5 people is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the
- 6 world, and
- 7 ACKNOWLEDGING that the United Nations Universal Decla-
- 8 ration of Human Rights, approved in 1948 without dissent by the
- 9 UN General Assembly, including the United States, establishes a
- 10 baseline standard for human rights both domestically and interna-
- 11 tionally, and
- 12 REMEMBERING the leadership role that Eleanor Roosevelt
- 13 and other prominent Americans have played in articulating global

14 human rights standards and in establishing United States' commit-
15 ment to honor and protect human rights in this country, and

16 RECOGNIZING the progeny of the Universal Declaration of
17 Human Rights, including, but not limited to: the Convention on
18 the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Con-
19 vention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination
20 Against Women; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the
21 Convention on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights; the Con-
22 vention on Civil and Political Rights; and the Convention Against
23 Torture, and

24 INVOKING the spirit of our times which recognizes the
25 increasingly global nature of our society and calls upon the peo-
26 ples of the world to rededicate themselves to the task of pro-
27 moting and protecting human rights and providing opportunities
28 for freedom, liberty and opportunity in all corners of the world,

29 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate and the House of Representa-
30 tives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the
31 same, to take steps to review international human rights standards
32 and evaluate integration of such standards into the policies and
33 laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts by ESTABLISHING
34 a special commission for the purpose of making an investigation
35 and study relative to the integration of international human rights
36 standards in the commonwealth's laws and policies. This commis-
37 sion shall be composed of nine members, two of whom shall be
38 appointed by the Speaker of the Senate, one of whom shall be
39 appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate; two of whom
40 shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House, one of whom
41 shall be the chairperson, and one of whom shall be appointed by
42 the Minority Leader of the House. In addition, the chairperson of
43 the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, the head
44 of the Civil Rights Division of the Attorney General's office and
45 the executive director of the Massachusetts Commission on the
46 Status of Women shall serve on this commission; and be it further

47 RESOLVED, that the special commission shall hold hearings
48 and take testimony at such places as it deems necessary in this
49 Commonwealth; and be it further

50 RESOLVED, that said commission shall report to the general
51 court the results of its investigation and study and its recommen-
52 dations, if any, together with drafts of legislation necessary to
53 carry its recommendations into effect by filing the same with the
54 clerk of the House of Representatives on or before the 30th of
55 September, 2006.